

ObamaCare. My first month in office on February 3, 2015, House Republicans successfully voted to repeal ObamaCare. In December of that same year, the Senate passed our legislation to repeal ObamaCare. President Obama vetoed it at that time. But we will have a new President next year.

Healthcare costs are on the rise because of ObamaCare. ObamaCare adds burdensome taxes, regulations, and mandates onto American consumers. The limited choice in health insurance plans is harming families and their budgets.

ObamaCare has killed 2.9 million jobs a year, has continued to raise health insurance costs, and has also placed the Federal Government in between patients and their doctors. Who are these 2.9 million Americans? They are disproportionately low-wage workers earning well below the average annual wage for all workers, which is less than \$46,000 a year, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The people who are hurt the most by ObamaCare are the ones that ObamaCare is supposed to help the most.

Research done by the National Center for Policy Analysis found that the average monthly premium costs in every demographic rose substantially after ObamaCare was implemented.

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West Virginians who get their health insurance through employer-sponsored programs are paying some of the highest rates in the United States. In West Virginia, premiums through employer-sponsored health insurance programs have climbed at a steady rate of about 6.4 percent annually since 2010, and it keeps getting worse. The 33,421 West Virginians who are currently enrolled in the Affordable Care Act do not need to see their rates hiked up again.

As a Republican in Congress, I want to ensure that everyone has access to health care, but it will be quality health care that people choose for themselves. That is why House Republicans have come up with a plan we call A Better Way. Our plan recognizes that people deserve more patient-centered care, not more bureaucracy. That means more choices, not more mandates.

A Better Way plan offers many improvements that will help West Virginia's Second Congressional District, including commonsense reforms to allow health insurance sales across State lines. You should have the freedom and flexibility to choose the care that is best for you. Insurers should compete for your business and treat you fair. You and your family should have access to the best lifesaving treatment in the world.

Under Chairman TOM PRICE's leadership, I believe that our healthcare system in America will thrive. Again, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my friend, Dr. TOM PRICE.

HONORING VIRGINIA STRATTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today to honor one of my longtime district staffers, Virginia Stratton, who retired recently.

Virginia had been with my office, serving the people of Iowa, since I first came into office in January 2007. Since then, she has handled more than 3,300 cases for Iowans having issues with the Department of Defense, the Department of Labor, and the Postal Service; but, by far, the largest portion of her cases involved the Veterans Administration.

As I travel across my district, all 24 counties, meeting with veterans, it never fails that one of the first things I hear is about how hard Virginia fought on their behalf or on behalf of their loved ones to cut through the red-tape at the VA.

Whether it was securing medals for veterans who served but didn't receive their proper recognition, or helping expedite a disability appeal, there was nothing—and I say nothing—Virginia would not do to ensure our veterans received the assistance that they needed. I always knew that if Virginia was on the case, there would be no stone left unturned and no question left unasked. She worked every day for the past 10 years to ensure our veterans received the care they earned and rightly deserved.

As a military parent myself, I believe we have no greater responsibility as a nation than to ensure our veterans are treated with the same dignity and honor with which they served our country. There is no one—no one, folks—who epitomizes that sentiment more than Virginia. She has been one of the greatest champions for veterans, and there was no issue that was too small or too great for her to take on.

In the nearly 10 years that Virginia worked for my office, she literally personally affected the lives of thousands of Iowans. Virginia's retirement is a loss for the people of Iowa, but the efforts and hours she invested in working on behalf of our veterans will never be forgotten. On behalf of the people of Iowa and all of the veterans of America, my wife Terry and I wish Virginia the best in the next chapter of her life.

TRIBUTE TO CHAIRMAN HAL ROGERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear colleague, mentor, and friend as he is concluding his 6 years as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

I have had the honor and pleasure of serving with Chairman HAL ROGERS for

the last 2 years. Since day one of his chairmanship, he has been the driving force to revive the appropriations process. Anyone who knows Chairman ROGERS, knows his top priority is regular order.

During his chairmanship, he has managed 140 appropriations bills on the floor, and managed more than 600 important oversight and budget hearings and markups. He has worked every day to ensure that the taxpayers' dollars are being used wisely and responsibly.

He has stopped wasteful spending, saving the country billions of dollars. He has also invested in higher priority programs, those that help keep our Nation on the right track, keep us safe, keep us secure, fight against drug abuse, and promote critical rural infrastructure needs. He has never lost sight of his home in Kentucky and the people he represents in Congress. Their priorities are his priorities.

I know this well because my district is right next door. We are only separated by the Tug Fork River, a small, narrow body of water that goes through the hills of Appalachia. Chairman ROGERS and I share the good people of Appalachia. We know the greatness of our people. We know how hard-working they are. It is the coal miners, it is the farmers, it is the factory workers, it is the teachers, it is the backbone of America we both have the honor of representing.

I have been able to see firsthand Chairman ROGERS' commitment to the people of Kentucky, his fight for the coal miners and retirees, his fight of the opioid crisis that is devastating communities throughout our region and this country, his support for education, and his leadership in creating the SOAR program, shaping our Appalachian region.

Chairman ROGERS has left an indelible mark as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. We thank him for his leadership in that role over these past 6 years. We have a better Appropriations Committee because of it and a better institution here in the House of Representatives, thanks to the leadership of Chairman HAL ROGERS.

I ask my fellow Members to join me in thanking him for his service as chairman. I am honored to look forward to working with him in his continuing capacity here in the House of Representatives.

Thank you, Chairman ROGERS.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF LEONARD ROTHSTEIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MENG) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of my constituent Leonard Rothstein, who passed away on September 16, 2016.

Mr. Rothstein bravely served in the Korean war as a private first class, contributing to the war effort as a radioman. Mr. Rothstein was honorably